

RadioActive Messenger

News and Information that Matters to the Apostolate of Catholic Radio

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ASSOCIATION HAPPENINGS

“THAT ALL MAY BE ONE”

2005 Global Catholic Radio Conference in October

Please make plans to attend this year’s Global Catholic Radio conference co-hosted with EWTN. The conference is set for October 20-22, 2005 at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham, AL. The conference will be an opportunity to learn, be inspired, and network with others working in Catholic radio. New this year is a Spanish track. Register early to receive a discount. Please see the attached Registration form and visit the [CRA website](#) for more details.

MEMBER SERVICES

The Catholic Radio Association offers its members several vital products and services that aid in all aspects of radio station operation:

- **Station acquisition assistance** - At the member’s request, the Association will help members to locate, evaluate and negotiate a station in their market. The Association has contacts developed with multiple radio station brokers to quickly find

THE CHESS GAME OF RADIO

Keeping an Eye on the Competition

By: Steve Moffitt

A competitive game of chess probably doesn’t come to mind when you’re thinking about your Catholic radio apostolate, but as Catholics struggling to get active in media (fifty years behind our Protestant brothers) we must take into account the realities of the market in which we find ourselves. I offer the following as a case in point. In the late 90’s Family Radio wanted to enter a major market metro area. One of their first efforts was to offer to purchase an existing Catholic Radio Station in that metro, while this offer was refused; it did not stop Family Radio from their intent to gain access to the Market. What they did instead was to file an application with the FCC for an FM station that is two channels away from the station they attempted to buy. The application was for a “town” on the fringes of the metro that, to put it succinctly, was literally a wide spot in the road. But, it qualified as a site for an FM station and so Family Radio got an FM station that reached the eastern half of the market they were trying to enter without a fight. Why? From what I’ve been able to determine, it is because no one at the Catholic Station (or any where else) was aware of Family Radio’s actions until it was too late to do anything about it, or they knew but didn’t care. In this case, the Catholic Station could have made a petition to deny Family Radio’s application, or counter-filed an application or perhaps applied for an upgrade of its own signal, but they did not. What is known for sure is that Family Radio received a construction permit for the station and built it.

The signal for the station however, is very spotty in the all but the Eastern half of the metro, so to overcome this Family Radio has been filing for and winning applications for translators all over the remaining areas of the metro market – virtually uncontested. They now have a total of four operating in and around the metro area. In addition, Family Radio is working on obtaining more translators throughout the rest of the region – a goal long held by the Catholic Station in this example, but not accomplished. Also, when Family Radio’s K-Love station went on the air in their market, the Catholic Station saw well over half of its 18-34 demographic (listeners between the ages of 18 and 34, a key marketing demographic group) switch to the new protestant station – roughly 1/4 of their listeners.

This kind of scenario could happen to you as well if you are not prepared. “The best defense is a good offense,” the old saying goes. In radio, in order to mount a good offense you have to be

stations that are for sale and can also help members to locate and negotiate a station acquisition directly with the owner.

- **Marketing** – The Association is committed to and currently developing a marketing strategy incorporating the internet, Catholic periodicals and Catholic television to promote Catholic radio across the nation.
- **Credit card processing** – The Association has developed a discounted credit card processing plan for members.
- **Special events** – The Association co-hosts with EWTN an annual Global Catholic Radio conference to provide members with the most up-to-date information and guidance available.
- **Newsletters/information exchange** – The Association provides to its members a [bimonthly newsletter](#) with information, pertinent news and ideas relevant to Catholic broadcasting.
- **Regulatory** – The Association shares with its members via its newsletter and/or e-mail broadcast any regulatory changes or updates of which it becomes aware.
- **Resource sharing** – The Association makes known to its members via its newsletter of any items or abilities possessed by Association members which other members may be interested in.
- **Engineering/technical** – The Association will evaluate the coverage area of a station that a member is seeking to purchase and provide recommendations as to its upgrade-ability, suggested purchase price, and signal

aware of what is going on in your area. There are several ways to avoid being left out in the dark when it comes to FCC applications that might affect your station. The simplest of these is to subscribe to the FCC's Daily Digest e-mail. This simple service lists actions and filings before the FCC on a daily basis - everything from license renewals to changes or modifications to existing applications. To subscribe simply go to the following web address www.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Digest/subscribe.html and follow the on screen instructions.

When the email arrives it will list by heading many topics of actions conducted that day at the FCC. You will want to review the "Broadcast Actions" and the "Broadcast Applications" headings which are found under the sub-heading of "Public Notices" usually near the top of the page. These will list by sub-category and by State, the information you will want to know. You will need to pay particular attention to any actions in your area that are on or near (1st, 2nd, or 3rd adjacent) your own frequency. Another method is to task your FCC attorney or your engineer with keeping up to date with this information. I recommend that you do this yourself. You will learn much in the process and my experience has been that no one is as diligent as you will be.

Diligence is very important as the market for radio frequencies is very fierce. But, observing FCC activity after the fact isn't enough. With the new application filing windows that the FCC has instituted, it is impossible to know when someone has filed for a new station in your area until it is too late for you to file an alternate proposal. The best course of action is to know how you want your apostolate to grow and to have a plan of action ready before filing periods for new licenses or translators come up (see sidebar). Take advantage of any possibilities in the upcoming NCE FM and LPFM services. Also, get to know your market. Who owns what and what are they doing with it? Is a station coming up for sale and how will its sale affect you? Knowing your market well can give you an edge when it comes to being prepared to take advantage of changes. Or, like a good chess game, knowledge of your market may make it possible for you to create changes that benefit your apostolate. Ultimately, you can't prevent someone from entering your market unless you can demonstrate that their entrance would interfere with your station. Unless you keep an eye on FCC activity in your market, you may not be aware of any possible interference until it is already established.

One final thought. As Catholics we are called to get involved in the mass media. Media, as an industry, comprises a unique and small community. We need to be active in that community. See if your market has a media luncheon or an association that you can join, and then get involved. Or, better yet, start a Catholic media group sponsored by your station – you'd be surprised at the number of Catholics who work in the media in your area.

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enhancement. The fee for a detailed upgrade analysis is only \$495. [V-Soft Communications](#), a broadcast consulting firm, has agreed to offer its AM/FM spectrum analysis services to CRA members at a \$950 discount if the initial engineering is done by the CRA. The Association has developed an LPFM equipment list that costs under \$11k.

- **Legal** – The Association has developed relationships with two attorneys who practice in FCC law, contractual work, and nonprofit corporations who offer their services to the members at significantly reduced rates.
- **Purchasing** – The Association has developed discount purchase plans for members on a wide variety of needed services and equipment:
 - [Broadcast Software International \(BSI\)](#) - 20% discount on all its proprietary software to Association members, and a 10% discount on all other software and hardware.
 - [Armstrong Transmitter Corporation](#) - 25% discount on the purchase of all transmitters and a 20% discount on the purchase of all other hardware to members.
 - [Gorman-Redlich](#) - 5% discount and free shipping on its well-known Emergency Alert Systems (EAS) to members.

How About a FREE NCE FM???

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING?

By Mark Hite
Multimedia Producer/Director
Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, NC

You have always heard, “You can never get something for nothing,” right? Well, that may not be true when it comes to searching for an inexpensive or yes, I will say it, FREE software solution to edit audio for your radio station. You are probably rubbing your chin and skeptically saying, “Yeah, but what can it do?”

There is a great piece of freeware out there called Audacity. **“Audacity is a free, easy-to-use audio editor and recorder for Windows, Mac OS X, GNU/Linux, and other operating systems.”** Audacity is a perfect tool for those short production tasks that need to be done to personalize your station’s on-air sound. Whether it be station ID’s, PSA’s, diocesan events calendar, announcements or any other short production task, Audacity can be invaluable in your radio apostolate.

Audacity is a tool that will allow you to record (from a microphone or other external audio device), import and export audio files (in mp3, wave or other popular formats), edit and mix tracks and apply effects to tracks (normalization, amplification and noise reduction). You will probably be doing only two track editing (music and voice over) but the software has the ability to edit unlimited tracks with some pretty fancy effects. The editor has VU meters to monitor your volume levels.

First, there are some systems requirements you need to run Audacity:

For Windows users:

- Windows 98, ME, 2000, XP, or later. (Sorry, Audacity is not supported on Windows 95 or NT 4.0.)
- Audacity runs best with at least 64 MB RAM and 300 MHz processor.

For Mac OS users:

- Audacity 1.2 requires Mac OS X 10.1 or later.
- Audacity 1.0 requires Mac OS 9.0 or later.
- Audacity runs best with at least 64 MB RAM and 300 MHz processor

Other equipment needed:

- Good microphone that will hook into your computer’s sound card (and a quiet place to record your voice over)
- Good computer sound card

Once you have got all the hardware and system requirements met, it is time to download your new FREE audio editing software. Go to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>. Click on the download tab to see the different operating system versions of the software. Then download the version for your computer workstation.

Now you are ready to test drive your new software. The best way to learn is to dive in and play around a bit. The Audacity website has a great help page that includes a FAQ page, documentation,

NCE FM Application Window

According to notices released by the FCC, its flurry of activity in clearing up mutually-exclusive applications in the NCE band (88.1-91.9 MHz) and comments made by some of its staff, it is very likely that the FCC will open an application window this year for new NCE applications. **Now** is the time to begin engineering studies, site location, etc. Once the window is announced applicants will only have a limited amount of time to complete all of the required aspects of the process. E-mail us today for an informational packet and see how you can establish an FM Catholic radio station in your area.

CONTACT - WE'VE MOVED!

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tutorials and links to other helpful resources. These are great resources to help you get started. Good luck and have fun!

There are several effects that you can play with but the following are the most useful: (For effects go to pull down menu EFFECT)

1. **Normalization** allows you to correct for DC offset (a vertical displacement of the track) and/or amplify such that the maximum amplitude is a fixed amount, -3 dB. It's useful to normalize all of your tracks before mixing.
2. **Amplify** allows changes to the volume of the selected audio. If you click the "Don't allow clipping" checkbox, it won't let you amplify so much that the audio ends up beyond the range of the waveform.
3. **Noise Removal** lets you clean up noise from a recording. First, select a small piece of audio that is silent except for the noise, select "Noise Removal", and click on the "Get Noise Profile" button. Then select all of the audio you want filtered select "Noise Removal" again, and click the "Remove Noise" button. You can experiment with the slider to try to remove more or less noise. It is normal for Noise Removal to result in some distortion. It works best when the audio signal is much louder than the noise.

Here are some websites to help you even further:

www.transom.org/tools/index.html - More information on how to produce audio for radio. Here you can find out all the basics from recording/interviewing to editing and mixing your production. The site also has helpful information about using Audacity.

Sound Portraits - http://soundportraits.org/education/how_to_record/
A practical guide for interviewing people

Not so fast.....

Now that you have the tools to record and edit small projects like PSA's and announcements, you are probably thinking of music to go along with your production.

Well, there are strict guidelines about using popular music for PSA's, commercials, radio announcements, etc. It is a complicated business and, if you are not careful, could land you and your organization into some trouble.

If you use popular music in your production, you must be a radio station license member of a "monitoring" agency such as ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and/or SESAC (www.sesac.com) which can cost some serious money. This assures that the artist who composed/performed the music gets paid for its use. One of the best ways to include music in your production is to buy either a license free or royalty free piece of music so that you don't have to fork out the big money.

Here are some license free music sources:

www.joedtracks.com - JOED Tracks has worked with the Christophers as well as Good Morning America.
www.networkmusic.com - used by HTN in San Antonio

www.studiocutz.com – used by Ken Stockard of the CCC

www.freeplaymusic.com

www.q-music.co.uk

www.sounddogs.com

www.freshmusic.com

Now you have all the tools you really need to edit your own production, no matter how small or large. Good luck and keep on spreading the Good News!

"The era of missions is not over. Christ still needs generous men and women who will become messengers of the Good News to the ends of the earth. Have no fear of following Him. Share freely with others the faith that you have received!" -- John Paul II